domestic prices showed a sharp rising trend. The domestic production of sugar in the 1994-95 and 1995-96 Sugar Seasons had been relatively high. Also, the prevailing international and domestic prices of sugar did not result in any significant imports of sugar in 1994-95, 1995-96 and 1996-97 Sugar Seasons. The domestic production has been below the country's requirement in the 1996-97 and 1997-98 Sugar Seasons. Moderate imports of sugar have come in during the 1997-98 Sugar Season, which have helped in moderating the rising prices for sugar have been sharply declining, and in order to ensure that, in future, the demestic industry is not adversely affected by cheap imports, with effect from 28.4.98 Ministry of Finance has notified the imposition of an Import duty. The free sale prices of sugar in 1996-97 and 1997-98 Sugar Seasons have maintained a level which yielded the Sugar Industry reasonable profits.

Import of Wheat

309. SHRI N.R. DASARI:
SHRI JALALUDIN ANSARI:

Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to import 1.5 million tonnes of wheat to meet the shortfall in the production during the current year; and

(b) if so, the reasons for the fall in the production and the details of proposed import of wheat, country-wise alongwith rates?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYA PAL SINGH YADAV): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Due to untimely rains during the sowing season, the Ministry of Agriculture had initially estimated that the production of wheat during the current Rabi Season was likely to be 64.51 million tonnes as against the production of 69.27 million tonnes last year. Government has, therefore, decided to import upto 20 lakh tonnes of wheat, of which STC has finalised contracts for import of 15 lakh tonnes of wheat from Australia @US$ 142.50 PMT FOB during 1998-99.

Prodcurement and Supply of Wheat and Rice

310. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any decision to sell the wheat and rice procured by FCI within the State from where it is purchased;

(b) if so, the reason therefor; and

(c) what are the steps taken by Government to ensure the supply of rice and wheat through PDS in States which are facing foodgrain shortage?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYA PAL SINGH YADAV): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The monthly quotas of foodgrains (rice and wheat) under TPDS are more or less fixed, and are repeated month after month. Any demand of States/UTs. for additional allocation over and above TPDS quotas is considered by Central Government on the basis of past lifting of foodgrains in the State/UTs and availability of foodgrains stocks in the Central Pool. As far as possible, the requests for additional allocations are considered favourably.

विदेश से गेहूं का आयात

311. श्री राघवजी:
श्री सीताराम केसरी:

क्या खाद्य और उपभोक्ता मामले मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या सरकार ने 1998 में विभिन्न देशों से गेहूं आयात करने के सौदे किये है, यदि हां, तो ऐसे सौदो-की मात्रा, दरों तथा निबंधन और शर्तों सहित ऐसे देशों के नाम क्या-क्या हैं;

(ख) गेहूं के आयात करने के क्या कारण हैं और किस स्तर पर यह निर्णय लिया गया था;

(ग) उक्त गेहूं कितनी-कितनी मात्रा में किस-किस तारीख को भारत के बंदरगाहों पर पहुंचना तय हुआ है; और